

Vice-Chancellor's Report | Te Pūrongo a te Tumu Whakarae



Dr Rod Carr

In this, my final report as Vice-Chancellor, I have an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the many achievements of students, staff, governing members and supporters in placing the University of Canterbury | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha (UC) on a strong trajectory for the future.

With increased numbers of students on campus, the opening of new buildings, the formation of partnerships, the launch of new programmes and the completion of agreements, 2018 has been a year of celebration and exciting developments.

Transformation

The 22 February 2011 earthquake brought extraordinary and rapid change for UC. A lot has changed — had to change — post-quake. Achievements in 2018 reveal how far we have come and show that the University is well prepared for the future.

The Student First programme continues to prepare UC for the future, putting students at the heart of our work. It is dedicated to improving the student administration experience so that UC can continue to deliver world-class education. This year the focus has been on improving systems and processes to support conversion and retention of students, simplifying processes for adding new courses, and ensuring our student administration systems are set up to allow this.

The UC Graduate Profile — with its attributes of entrepreneurship and work readiness, community engagement, global awareness and bicultural competence — will further strengthen our graduates who have mastered their chosen field of academic study. UC has the resources to support new strategic

investment in research and teaching, and continues to build a collaborative and constructive working environment for staff.

Stage 1 of the \$220 million Rutherford Regional Science and Innovation Centre — the Ernest Rutherford building — was officially opened by New Zealand's Prime Minister the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern early this year. Named for renowned UC alumnus Lord Rutherford, it includes specialist teaching and research laboratories for Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, Geography and Biological Sciences. Construction of Stage 2 is well under way — the innovative multi-storey timber-framed building is named for UC alumna Beatrice Tinsley, one of the most creative and significant theoreticians in modern astronomy.

Now complete, the Canterbury Engineering the Future project rebuilt or completely refurbished every wing of the Engineering Precinct. I am proud that it will provide UC students with some of the best facilities for teaching, learning and research in the southern hemisphere for decades to come.

The blessing of the new Rehua building in December, ready for teaching from mid-January 2019, marked a special moment in UC's recovery. Rehua will be the central hub for education, entrepreneurship and executive development.

Construction of the new University of Canterbury Students' Association (UCSA) building, Haere-roa, is on track for completion in 2019 and I am proud of the UCSA's efforts to raise \$5 million for the project. The outcome will be an extraordinary new home for students — a state-of-the-art base that is accessible, inviting, supportive and fun. It was a highlight of my year to join members of the 2018 UCSA executive in a fundraising effort at the Queenstown Marathon. Thank you to those who have contributed or will contribute to this ongoing fundraising campaign.

Research and innovation

UC's bold vision for an increased focus on the future of food, the Kia Tōpū programme, was announced this year. The ultimate goal is to increase the University's contribution to feeding people in a sustainable way. Over the next five years, UC will invest at least \$30 million in research and teaching to help develop the skills and knowledge to support the sustainable production, efficient processing and secure distribution of healthy foods. This initiative will add significant value

to healthy foods-related research and teaching at a time when the future of food and new food sources are becoming increasingly relevant.

The School of Product Design, aimed at producing creative, technically savvy graduates who are business-ready, officially opened in March. It is going from strength to strength with demand for the new degree programme exceeding all expectations.

The success of our academics and researchers continues to demonstrate their ability to make a difference, which directly benefits society. For example, one of the eight UC researchers awarded Royal Society Te Apārangi Marsden funding is Dr Laurie McLay, from the College of Education, Health and Human Development, for her work on sleep problems in children. Fellow Marsden funding recipient Professor Paul Millar, from the College of Arts, will undertake "Kōrero mai. Tell us your earthquake story", a longitudinal study of post-disaster narratives, re-recording a representative subset of the 720 participants who in 2012 gave their earthquake stories to UC QuakeBox.

Biochemistry Lecturer Dr Jodie Johnston, from UC's Biomolecular Interaction Centre, won funding from the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation to study Staph infection-causing bacteria, work that could save lives around the world.

Rutherford Discovery Fellow, Dr Jonathan Tonkin aims to advance understanding of ecological networks, enabling better prediction and management of entire ecosystems in future climate settings where natural cycles in the environment are disrupted.

I have had the opportunity to congratulate many students who have achieved academic excellence or demonstrated a commitment to contributing to the community. Among them is UC doctoral candidate Melissa Derby (Ngāti Ranginui) who won the Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Graduate Award to further her postgraduate research in the field of indigenous development in the United States of America. She is researching critical theories of race, ethnicity and indigeneity. Her thesis will also contribute to the Literacy strand of A Better Start: E Tipu e Rea National Science Challenge.

In April, New Zealand's first Global Humanitarian Engineering graduates received their diplomas. The diploma combines Arts courses in the humanities and social sciences

with service-based practical engineering fieldwork. Students' work on community-identified engineering issues and projects, often in disadvantaged communities, such as assisting in disaster relief areas.

The Student Volunteer Army (SVA), which was formed in the spirit of volunteerism following the Canterbury earthquakes, demonstrated its ability to contribute globally. In a youth summit hosted by UC, SVA members met with members of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School's Never Again MSD movement from Florida, USA, which resulted in a 'how-to' guide for organising youth movements. Members of the SVA have also made a return visit to the school in Florida and to the capital, Washington DC.

Growth

One consequence of the February 2011 earthquake was a sharp drop in student enrolments. Enormous recruitment efforts have since been made and the campus was buzzing with students in 2018. Student numbers received a further boost this year with a 22% increase in mid-year enrolments compared to 2017 and enrolment figures were looking positive for 2019. There were 17,299 domestic and full-fee students enrolled at the end of December 2018, compared to 16,253 at the end of 2017, and this number will continue to rise through January. In addition, with record numbers of postgraduate students, UC is creating a whole new generation of thought leaders.

The demographics of the student body have changed significantly, with greater numbers of full-fee paying international students welcomed into our UC community. UC is well on the way to achieving a more international student body and greater global awareness in all bachelor's degrees. By August 2018, of all UC students enrolled in any degree, certificate or diploma, 26% were not originally from New Zealand; showing UC is on the right path for internationalisation.

As student numbers grow again, so does our need for more accommodation. This year, Hayashi accommodation opened, consisting of 16 two-storey townhouses and 10 studio apartments, accommodating individual students and couples in their second year of study and beyond. A business case was also approved to build new residential accommodation on UC land near Bishop Julius Hall.

'With increased numbers of students on campus, the opening of new buildings, the formation of partnerships, the launch of new programmes and the completion of agreements, 2018 has been a year of celebration and exciting developments.'

In August, Lincoln University and UC jointly announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding to explore partnership and merger options to accelerate and enhance Lincoln's unique 140-year contribution to the land-based sectors and the wider economy. A proposal on this partnership was sent to the Minister of Education at the end of 2018.

It was also announced that UC and Lincoln University, in partnership with the University of Adelaide, would become the first New Zealand providers of the award-winning Children's University educational programme. Together, we are collaborating with local stakeholders and iwi to establish a New Zealand Children's University, which will offer learning opportunities outside the classroom to school students.

Closing the recovery chapter

In September 2014, the Crown and UC signed an agreement that the Crown would support the University's recovery from the effects of the Canterbury earthquakes. The agreement was that the Crown would provide up to \$260 million and that UC would deliver the rebuild of the Engineering and Science precincts and the new Education building, Rehua, along with introducing UC-wide graduate attributes. This partnership has increased enrolments to pre-quake levels and is returning UC to operating surpluses by 2019. The Crown's contributions are part of the wider rebuild programme of about \$1.2 billion across the whole of the main Christchurch campuses and the University's field stations.

The Engineering Precinct rebuild is complete; the Science Precinct rebuild is on schedule for completion in 2019; the graduate attributes are being incorporated into all undergraduate degrees; international enrolments are well ahead of targets; and domestic enrolments are forecast to hit pre-quake levels in 2021 — a year ahead of the original target.

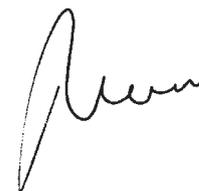
UC has now received the full \$260 million that was part of the Crown Funding Agreement — an important milestone as the recovery chapter closes. I wish to express my enormous gratitude to the Crown for what has been an exceptional contribution to UC's successful recovery.

UC is immeasurably appreciative of the contribution that businesses, alumni and friends of the University make. I trust you see, as I do, the remarkable value of your support reflected in the tangible outcomes of UC's transformation and growth.

A surplus of \$9.6 million in 2018 is further evidence that the course UC is on is strong, sustainable and resilient. In welcoming the Vice-Chancellor designate, Professor Cheryl de la Rey, I feel resoundingly optimistic for the future of the University and wish her all the best.

Nā reira, he mihi tēnei ki ngā kaimahi katoa o te whare wānanga. Tēnā koutou i runga i tā koutou kaha tautoko, kaha manaaki i a au i aku tau hei Tumu Whakarae i Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha.

Therefore I acknowledge all the staff of UC, and thank you in recognition of your strong support and care of me in my years as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canterbury.



Dr Rod Carr
Vice-Chancellor | Tumu Whakarae 2018